

**WATER RIGHTS AMENDMENTS**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

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**LONG TITLE****General Description:**

This bill requires that a person who applies for a permanent or temporary change to a water right meet certain qualifications.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines terms;
- requires that a person who applies for a permanent or temporary change to a water right meet certain qualifications, including being:
  - a holder of an approved but unperfected application to appropriate water;
  - the record owner of a perfected water right;
  - a person who has written authorization from a person described above to file a change application on that person's behalf; or
  - a shareholder in a water company who files in accordance with Section 73-3-3.5; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**73-3-3**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2012, Chapter 229

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **73-3-3** is amended to read:

**73-3-3. Permanent or temporary changes in point of diversion, place of use, or**

**purpose of use.**

(1) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Permanent change" means a change, for an indefinite period of time ~~[with an intent to relinquish the original]~~, to the:

(i) point of diversion[;];

(ii) place of use[; ~~or purpose of use.~~];

(iii) period of use;

(iv) nature of use for which the water is currently appropriated; or

(v) addition or deletion of storage as an authorized use.

(b) "Person entitled to use water" means:

(i) the holder of an approved but unperfected application to appropriate water;

(ii) the record owner of a perfected water right;

(iii) a person who has written authorization from a person described in Subsection (1)(a)(i) or (ii) to file a change application on that person's behalf; or

(iv) a shareholder in a water company who files a change application in accordance with Section 73-3-3.5.

~~[(b)]~~ (c) "Temporary change" means a change for a fixed period of time, not exceeding one year[;] to the:

~~[(2)(a) Subject to Subsection (2)(c), a person entitled to the use of water may make permanent or temporary changes in the:]~~

(i) point of diversion;

(ii) place of use; [or]

~~[(iii) purpose of use for which the water was originally appropriated.]~~

(iii) period of use;

(iv) nature of use for which the water is currently appropriated; or

(v) addition or deletion of storage as an authorized use.

(2) (a) A person may not make a permanent or temporary change to a water right or an approved application to appropriate water, including a water right or an approved application to appropriate water in a general determination of rights or other suit, unless the person:

(i) is a person entitled to use water; and

(ii) makes the change in accordance with this section.

(b) Except as provided by Section 73-3-30, a change may not be made if it impairs a vested water right without just compensation.

(c) A change application on a federal reclamation project water right shall be signed by:

(i) the local water users organization that is contractually responsible for:

(A) the operation and maintenance of the project; or

(B) the repayment of project costs; and

(ii) the record owner of the water right.

(3) A person entitled to use water shall change a point of diversion, place of use, ~~purpose of water use,~~ period of use, nature of use, or amount of authorized storage including water involved in a general adjudication or other suit, in the manner provided in this section.

(4) (a) A person entitled to use water who files a change application with the state engineer may not make ~~[a] the permanent or temporary change requested in the application~~ unless, and to the extent that, the state engineer approves the change application.

(b) A person entitled to use water shall submit a change application upon forms furnished by the state engineer and shall set forth:

(i) the applicant's name;

(ii) the water right description, including the water right number;

(iii) the water quantity;

(iv) the stream or water source;

(v) if applicable, the point on the stream or water source where the water is diverted;

(vi) if applicable, the point to which it is proposed to change the diversion of the water;

(vii) the place, purpose, and extent of the present use;

(viii) the place, purpose, and extent of the proposed use; and

(ix) any other information that the state engineer requires.

(5) (a) The state engineer shall follow the same procedures, and the rights and duties of the applicants with respect to applications for permanent changes of point of diversion, place of use, or purpose of use shall be the same, as provided in this title for applications to appropriate water.

(b) The state engineer may waive notice for a permanent change application involving only a change in point of diversion of 660 feet or less.

(6) (a) The state engineer shall investigate all temporary change applications.

(b) If the state engineer finds that the temporary change will not impair a vested water right, the state engineer shall issue an order authorizing the change.

(c) If the state engineer finds that the change sought might impair a vested water right, before authorizing the change, the state engineer shall give notice of the application to any person whose right may be affected by the change.

(d) Before making an investigation or giving notice, the state engineer may require the applicant to deposit a sum of money sufficient to pay the expenses of the investigation and publication of notice.

(7) (a) Except as provided by Section 73-3-30, the state engineer may not reject a permanent or temporary change application for the sole reason that the change would impair a vested water right.

(b) If otherwise proper, the state engineer may approve a permanent or temporary change application for part of the water involved or upon the condition that the applicant acquire the conflicting water right.

(8) (a) A person holding an approved application for the appropriation of water may change the point of diversion, place of use, or purpose of use.

(b) A change of an approved application to appropriate water does not:

(i) affect the priority of the original application to appropriate water; or

(ii) extend the time period within which the construction of work is to begin or be completed.

(9) Any person who [~~changes or who attempts to change a point of diversion, place of use, or purpose of use, either permanently or temporarily, without first applying to the state engineer in the manner provided~~] makes a permanent or temporary change before obtaining an approved change application under in this section:

(a) obtains no right;

(b) is guilty of a crime punishable under Section 73-2-27 if the change or attempted change is made knowingly or intentionally; and

(c) is guilty of a separately punishable offense for each day of the unlawful change.

(10) (a) This section does not apply to the replacement of an existing well by a new well drilled within a radius of 150 feet from the point of diversion of the existing well.

125           (b) Any replacement well must be drilled in accordance with the requirements of  
126   Section 73-3-28.